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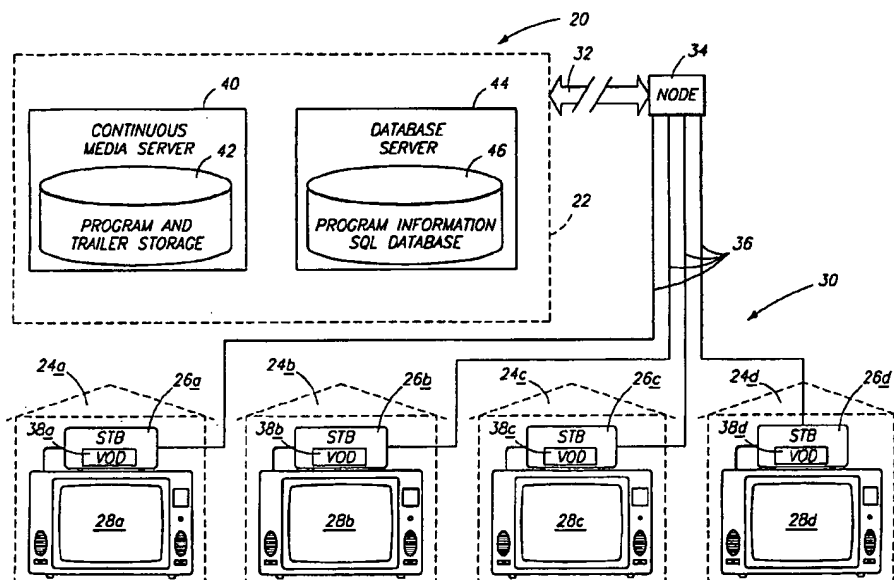
**United States Patent** [19]**Dunn**[11] **Patent Number:** **5,945,987**[45] **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 31, 1999****[54] INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING SHORT SETS OF PREVIEW VIDEO TRAILERS****[75] Inventor:** **Matthew W. Dunn**, Seattle, Wash.**[73] Assignee:** **Microsoft Corporation**, Redmond, Wash.**[21] Appl. No.:** **08/437,086****[22] Filed:** **May 5, 1995****[51] Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup>** ..... **H04N 7/10; H04N 7/14****[52] U.S. Cl.** ..... **345/327; 348/13; 348/7; 348/10; 348/12****[58] Field of Search** ..... **348/12, 13, 7, 348/6, 10, 906; H04N 7/10, 7/14****[56] References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

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An interactive entertainment network system has a video-on-demand (VOD) application which enables viewers to select criteria for grouping various video content programs (e.g., movies, games, TV shows, etc.) into manageable sets for convenient review. Once grouped, the previews or "trailers" for the set of programs are displayed. The VOD application permits the viewer to browse the trailers at their own rate, skipping forward to the next trailer or backward to the previous trailer. If the viewer settles on a particular program, the VOD application also allows the user to rent the program immediately from the trailer being displayed on their television set, without returning to a menu or other order screen.

**5 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets**

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5945987 A

TITLE: Interactive entertainment network system and method for providing short sets of preview video trailers

BSPR:

Each user interface unit has a processor and a video-on-demand (VOD) application which executes on that processor. The VOD application enables a user to select a group of programs from among all of the programs stored at the headend based upon a specified criteria, such as new releases, star name, title, customized viewer list, or any other definable criteria. The criteria is preferably presented as scrollable lists which the viewer can manipulate to select a certain criteria. In an example implementation, two lists can be presented simultaneously: a star list and a title list. The star list is first displayed, and upon selection of a star, a second list of movie titles in which the selected actor appears is displayed. The second list of movies provides an example manageable set of related video programs from which the viewer can choose.

DEPR:

Headend 22 also has a database server 44 to store the programming information about each program and trailer. Database server 44 contains a structured query language (SQL) database 46 with program data records containing information relating to available movies, games, TV shows, or other programs. The SQL records reflect such things as the program title, cast members, director, rating, whether the program has closed captioning or stereo audio, length of program, scheduled time of the program, network name, program category, description text, and so forth. The program information is used by the VOD and other applications running on the STB (such as the electronic programming guide) to assist the viewer when previewing different programs.